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Combat Readiness Center Leader Stresses Safety to Soldiers in Iraq

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CAMP TAJI, Iraq (Army News Service, March 15, 2007) - Safety: a word echoed through the ranks of the 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. But, why?

U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center Commander Brig. Gen. William Forrester Jr. emphasized every Soldiers' ability to be a safety officer during a recent visit with troops.

"The way I look at it is you all have one safety officer in this formation. That isn't enough to make sure that all of us are reminded about what's important," he said.

Putting the responsibility of safety on every Soldier reinforces the battle buddy system - a system that the Army has stressed for years.

"Take ownership of not just your own actions, but of the actions of your teammate. ... The power is in you guys to protect your own, because if you don't, then you're going to be operating with less than which you came with," said Forrester.

Along with keeping the buddy system at the forefront of the Soldiers minds, Forrester redefined "fallen comrade."

"A fallen comrade might not be someone whose just in a hot landing zone, but someone who's had too much to drink, someone who's tired, someone who's sick, someone who's been sexually assaulted...", he said to the Soldiers.

"We've got to look at each other and ask, 'Are you okay? Are you alright?' To think we can't wrap our arms around them and protect them from doing something stupid when they're down is foolish," said Forrester.

"If an accident happens, usually somebody in the unit knew that Soldier's behavior could lead to an accident. And so many times we don't intervene just because he's a good guy," he said.

Forrester suggested that unit leaders call the family of Soldiers heading home and tell them to watch out for them because they are an integral part of the mission.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Alan Koch, unit safety officer, agrees. "Let's say my mom called me the day I got home from leave and said, 'Alan, you be careful now. Don't go crazy just because you're home on leave.' That's interesting, that would be a great idea."

Koch has found that using the composite risk-management process, a continual process that helps mitigate or eliminate dangers, is something every Soldier should use as a tool to stay safe.

"The CRM process should be the way you think about things - whether you're going on a date or going flying. You should think about it," said Koch.

Soldiers can find information about the CRM process and a 40-minute online course at <https://crc.army.mil>.



Brig. Gen. William Forrester Jr., the commanding general of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center and director of Army safety, talks with Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, during a visit to Camp Taji, Iraq. Forrester stressed taking accountability for not only the individual, but battle buddies, as well.